

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/682,191

Applicant(s)

NAKAZATO ET AL.

Examiner

Susan S. Lee

Art Unit

2852

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to amendment filed 10/14/04.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 43-76.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 10 October 2003 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. 09/305,275.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Michael Monaco on October 27, 2004.

The application has been amended as follows:

As to claim 73, line 2, change "the housing" to - - a housing - -.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The primary reason for allowance of claims 43-60 is the inclusion of a transfer belt support unit including a transfer belt hingedly attached to the image forming apparatus at a lower end position of the transfer belt support unit and movable between a first position covering the plurality of image forming cartridges and a second position uncovering the plurality of image forming cartridges, wherein each of the image forming cartridges is configured to be mounted to or dismounted from the image forming apparatus when the transfer belt support unit is in the second position. This is found in all of claims 43-60, but not disclosed nor suggested by the prior art of record.

The primary reason for allowance of claims 61-69 is the inclusion of a means for supporting a transfer belt, including a transfer belt, being hingedly attached to an image

forming apparatus at a lower end position of the transfer belt supporting means and movable between a first position covering the plurality of the image forming means and a second position uncovering the plurality of the image forming means, wherein each of the image forming means is configured to be mounted to or dismounted from the image forming apparatus when the transfer belt supporting means is in the second position. This is found in all of claims 61-69, but not disclosed nor suggested by the prior art of record.


The primary reason for allowance of claims 70-76 is the inclusion of a method of passing the plurality of light beams through corresponding slots of a vertical stay; receiving on each of a plurality of image forming cartridges a respective one of the plurality of light beams which have passed through the corresponding slots of the vertical stay; and transferring the toner image to a transfer medium on a transfer belt housed in a transfer belt support unit including at least an upper roller and a lower roller around which the transfer belt moves, the transfer belt support unit being hingedly attached to an image forming apparatus at a lower end position of the transfer belt unit and movable between a first position covering the plurality of the image forming cartridges and a second position uncovering the plurality of the image forming cartridges, wherein each of the image forming cartridges is configured to be mounted to or dismounted from the image forming apparatus when the transfer belt support unit is in the second position. This is found in all of claims 70-76, but not disclosed nor suggested by the prior art of record.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Susan S. Lee whose telephone number is 571-272-2137. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon. - Fri., 10:30-8:00, Second Monday Off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Art Grimley can be reached on 571-272-2136 or 571-272-2800 (Ext. 52). The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Susan S. Lee
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2852